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Subject: The End of Era: Some Final Thoughts and Recognition of ORD's Presence in Las Vegas

The end of this week marks a significant moment for NERL, ORD and EPA - as of September 30, 2018, ORD will be officially ending its research operations in Las Vegas, NV. So, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the significant contributions made by EPA-ORD staff stationed in Las Vegas over the years. These contributions include research, development, and technology transfer programs to improve our understanding of environmental exposures to ecological and human receptors in support of EPA's mission, as well as, direct support in response to some of our nation's most significant environmental disasters. Our scientists in Las Vegas have developed and applied a variety of field, laboratory, geospatial, and computational tools to monitor and characterize impacts on land and ecosystems and to address important topics such as vapor intrusion, hydraulic fracturing, pharmaceuticals and personal care products, tire crumb exposure, and harmful algae blooms.

I would also like to acknowledge the impact that the decision to end ORD operations in Las Vegas has had on our staff and I would like to thank them for their professionalism as they worked through the extremely difficult personal and professional decisions with which they were faced. For our staff who have relocated from Las Vegas, we welcome them to their new homes and look forward to continuing to work with them to support and advance the Agency's mission. To staff who are leaving (or have left) the Agency, we thank them for their contributions to EPA, ORD, and NERL and for their service to our country.

For those that are interested in reflecting a bit more on our Las Vegas history, below is a timeline of some of the key milestones for EPA-ORD's presence in Las Vegas.

Thank you.

Timeline of EPA/ORD in Las Vegas

- 1954: EPA-Las Vegas started off as a field station of the US Public Health Service (PHS) with the goal to monitor and evaluate radioactivity for the US Atomic Energy Commission.
- 1966: The Southwestern Radiological Health Facility (SWRHL) consolidated the operation of 219 people in five buildings on the university campus.
- 1970: The SWRHL is transferred from the PHS to the newly founded Environmental Protection Agency. Responsibilities included management of PHS' national radiological health programs.
- 1971: The SWRHL became an element of the Office of Research and Development and renamed the Western Environmental Research Laboratory (WERL).
- 1971: WERL initiated a remote sensing program with 5 aircraft and using three Huey helicopters and a mobile lab, began the National Lake Eutrophication Study.
- 1972: WERL became the National Environmental Research Center Las Vegas (NERC-LV).
- 1979: Laboratory name changed to Environmental Monitoring Systems Laboratory (EMSL-LV).
- 1979: EMSL-LV staff performed radiation monitoring and clean-up at Three Mile Island.
- 1980: EMSL-LV staff performed environmental forensics on the chemical waste associated with Love Canal contamination.
- 1989: EMSL-LV staff assisted with the bio-remediation and beach clean-up of the Exxon Valdez oil spill.
- 1995: EMSL-LV became the Characterization Research Division of the newly formed National Exposure Research Laboratory (NERL).
- 2000: Characterization Research Division became the Environmental Sciences Division (ESD) in NERL.
- 2010: ESD staff analyzed dispersant agents and mapped oil plume associated with Deep Water Horizon spill.

- 2015: With NERL's reorganization, research staff in Las Vegas are re-assigned to the Exposure Methods and Measurements Division and the Systems Exposure Division.
- 2018: ORD ends research operations in Las Vegas.

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